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News Release

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Grammy-winning South African Vocal Group Performs at The Cleveland Museum of Art on March 5

"Ladysmith Black Mombazo imbues its music with a haunting, ethereal, dreamlike quality."
– The New York Times

CLEVELAND, OH (Feb. 18, 2004) — Regarded as South Africa's cultural emissaries at home and around the world, the dynamic vocal group **Ladysmith Black Mombazo** will take the stage for this special added performance at the Cleveland Museum of Art's (CMA) **Gartner Auditorium, on Friday, March 5, at 7:30 p.m.** The concert is part of the VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts.

Admission for the performance is $30 and $27; $27 and $25 for CMA members. Tickets are available by calling 216-421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

Having recorded more than 40 albums and with record sales topping six million albums sold, this engaging and energetic South African ensemble has gained a worldwide following. Best known for their work with Paul Simon on his 1986 "Graceland" album, Ladysmith Black Mombazo have recorded with numerous other artists including Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, George Clinton and Ben Harper. Their 1987 U.S. debut album, "Shaka Zulu" received a Grammy for Best Traditional Folk Album.

Founder Joseph Shabalala showed a talent for singing, but was rarely pleased with the results from groups that he performed in. During the mid-1960's, Shabalala formed a group out of family members who sang harmonies based on a dream that he had one night. Thus formed the foundations for Ladysmith Black Mombazo. Their traditional music style, called Isicathamiya (Is-cot-a-me-ya) was born in the mines of South Africa where the poor workers would entertain themselves by singing songs. Their dance moves are reminiscent of the soft steps miners choreographed so as not to disturb the security guards.

The group received their peculiar name as a result of winning every singing competition that they entered. "Ladysmith" refers to the hometown of Shabalala, "Black" is derived from the black oxen that are considered to be the strongest animal on the local farms, and "Mombazo" makes reference to an axe, a symbolic symbol of the group's ability to "chop down" the competition.

Their enormous success has led to countless Grammy, Academy, and Emmy award nominations and various appearances in films, commercials, and television programs. Their musical talents have transcended cultural boundaries and the group has committed itself to raising awareness of South African culture. Shabalala continues to sing and has begun teaching the next generation of singers in the group because of the retirement of several founding members.

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The next performance in the VIVA! Festival of Performing Arts will be **Ute Lemper: The Best of Ute Lemper on Friday, March 19, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium.** Best known for her starring roles in the Broadway and West End productions of "Chicago" and "Cabaret," the exquisite German-born chanteuse has been universally praised for her interpretations of Berlin cabaret songs, the works of Kurt Weill, and the songs of Edith Piaf and Marlene Dietrich. **Only a limited number of tickets are available** for $35 and $31; $31 and $28 for CMA members by calling (216) 421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or buying online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

For more information about the CMA and its programs, please call (216) 421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit our web site at www.ClevelandArt.org.

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The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship, and art acquisitions. For more information on the museum, its holdings, programs, services, and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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